



## CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF KALAMAZOO

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### **Bishop reaffirms support of refugee, immigrant and migrant communities in face of new government restrictions**

Kalamazoo, Mich., (January 30, 2017): In light of new governmental immigration restrictions announced this past Friday, January 27<sup>th</sup>, Bishop Paul J. Bradley, has released the following statement affirming the Catholic Church's commitment to the refugee, immigrant and migrant communities:

"The Catholic Church in the Diocese of Kalamazoo, which is composed of, and enriched by, priests, religious Sisters as well as lay faithful from many different countries, reaffirms our solidarity with them as well as all people who are poor, homeless, marginalized and in need. At this particular time, in the face of newly-announced government restrictions on immigration policies, and the resulting anxiety and confusion this is causing among many here in our Diocese, we stand with them, and remain opposed to any laws that may be unjust. We pledge to accompany our sisters and brothers who find themselves in difficulty due to changes in these immigration policies through our prayerful support and by continuing our many other ministries and programs which provide essential services. We pledge to pursue resolutions that are just and proper to the dignity we all share as sons and daughters of God.

"In the words of Cardinal Daniel DiNardo, President of the United States Catholic Conference of Bishops:

'Achieving "one nation under God" has not always been easy, but each earlier period of immigration has ultimately strengthened our society. Those who seek to do us harm must be kept from our shores, but those fleeing persecution in need of hope and ready to help us build a better America must be welcomed. We need

not sink into the darkness of isolation. Comprehensive immigration reform and a humane refugee policy are equally necessary and possible. We join our voice with the Holy Father and the universal Church in a continued witness to the love that unites us, praying for the strength to resist the fear that divides us.’

(Statement on National Migration Week, January 8-15, 2017)

Bishop Bradley continues, “While it is essential to ensure that our country is protected and that we have secure borders, we cannot do so at the expense of one of our nation’s most cherished values: to welcome the stranger, in the spirit of the very heart of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Guided by God’s Holy Spirit, let us pray for the wisdom and courage to live up to our Gospel values and our nation’s values here in our own Diocese and throughout our country, and to allow all people to live here in freedom and without fear.”

The Diocese of Kalamazoo offers a number of programs and ministries for refugees, immigrants and migrant farmworkers including its Immigration Assistance Program offering affordable legal services to those seeking a path to citizenship. In addition many local parish communities support refugee families with essential needs.

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**The Diocese of Kalamazoo** is the territory of Catholic churches and community led by Bishop Paul J. Bradley, installed as the fourth Bishop of the Diocese on June 5, 2009. The Diocese was founded in 1971 when the Second Vatican Council called for the creation of smaller Dioceses so that bishops could be more available to the people they serve. Today the Diocese of Kalamazoo encompasses 5,337 square miles of nine counties in southwest Michigan: Allegan, Barry, Van Buren, Kalamazoo, Calhoun, Berrien, Cass, St. Joseph and Branch and includes 110,000 Catholics, 59 parishes as well as 23 Catholic schools.

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